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p. 226.—*trygðar* ; the sing. form *tryggð* should have been mentioned also.

p. 228.—*vegr* ; add *M.*

p. 228.—Under *veita*, '*honom er veit*'; the full expression is *honom er veit í*.

p. 231.—*þríóta* 'zu Ende gehen'; *veizlona þrýtr* 'das Gastmahl geht zu Ende'; the case is like that quoted under *bera*; the verb is originally transitive (cf. Gothic *þriutan*) and the construction is an impersonal one.

p. 237.—Addition to § 220 ; *r* schwindet vor *s* 'gegen Ende des 13. Jahrhunderts'; the change appears to have occurred earlier, in the first half of the 13th century; cf. *vesalinga*, p. 150 (from the *Homilfubók*).

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Otto Jespersen. *Sprogundervisning*. København, 1901.

In this small volume of 183 pages we have the fully matured views of a very competent authority on the teaching of languages. As is well known, Jespersen belongs to a small group of eminent phoneticians—Sweet, Storm, Lundell, Vietor, Passy, etc.—who were led some years ago to take a keen interest in the practical questions of language-teaching, because they had observed that the ordinary work of the schools led to meagre and often shabby results. The pupil who had studied his modern language several years could neither pronounce it decently from a book, nor speak it so as to be understood by one to the manner born, nor write it without ridiculous blunders. His only valuable attainment was the ability to read books in the language studied,—of course with a very imperfect appreciation of idiomatic niceties. This seemed to show that methods of teaching must be radically vicious ; for it was matter of common observation that children under favorable conditions could in a few months acquire by imitation a proficiency such as the schools utterly failed to impart after years of effort.

Hence came the conviction on the part of prominent linguistic scholars like those mentioned above that a reform was really needed

and should be taken up by men of science and not left entirely to the advertising *Sprachmeister*. Almost from the first Jespersen has been identified with the reform agitation whose now copious literature is commonly referred back to Viëtor's pamphlet *Quousque Tandem*, of the year 1883, as its fountain-head. In the book at hand he reviews the whole subject, devoting some attention to each and all of the pedagogical recommendations of the new school and not hesitating to say again some things that he has said before. His examples usually have regard to the teaching of English and French to Danish children, but the principles set forth are more or less applicable wherever a living language is the subject of instruction. The extensive acceptance of the new doctrines is hinted at in the motto from Hamlet : "This was sometime a paradox, but now the time gives it proofe."

The author first discusses, with a touch of humor, the multifarious names that have been suggested for the new ideas in their totality,—as the reform method, the new, newer and newest method; the natural, rational, correct, direct, and phonetic method; the imitative, analytic, concrete, observational, conversational, anti-grammatical, and even the "quousquistic" method. Of course none of these names is quite satisfactory. After considering the very important subject of aim in teaching Jespersen pays his respects to that all-too-familiar type of school exercise which consists of disconnected sentences put together without rime or reason. Some good illustrations of the bad thing are given from much-used Danish school-books. Next there is a discussion of reading-matter for beginners. This, the author urges, should consist of connected, sensible, interesting literature, showing the every-day words, phrases and idioms of the language as naturally and correctly employed. It is not at all necessary, in his opinion, to guard against the occurrence in the reading-lesson of grammatical "difficulties" that have not yet been systematically dealt with.

On the two subjects about which the reformers have always made the most ado, translation and the teaching of grammar, Jespersen expresses himself at some length. As for translation, he does not condemn it absolutely, but evidently thinks that it should be resorted to sparingly, as being "not the only nor the best means of imparting knowledge." He devotes considerable space to a discussion of the various expedients by which it can be dispensed with.

The value of translation as a means of testing the learner, for example, of finding out whether he has a clear and correct idea of that which he is supposed to have learned before, is not denied; but here again Jespersen would prefer to have the teacher find out in some other way if possible.

On the whole, I think I have less dread of translation than has Jespersen. The subject is one that can be debated endlessly without arriving at a rule of procedure valid under all circumstances. I can imagine a good teacher saying, after reading Jespersen on translation: Why all this beating about the bush to avoid what may be the shortest and easiest way to the desired end? It is true that an excessive reliance upon translation, whether from or into the language that is being studied, begets bad habits. It is also true that the child, in learning his mother tongue, or in learning by imitation a language not his mother tongue, does not ordinarily make use of translation. Nor does he have any need of paradigms and grammatical rules. His knowledge of and feeling for the proprieties of the language come to him by a different process. But it can not be claimed that this is an essential process. It consists of a long series of impressions, with resulting mental reactions and readjustments, which extend over years. But when the learner is one who already knows one language (his mother tongue), and we wish to give him a new set of symbols for the expression of his thought, is it not wise economy to make free use of what he already knows? It is not sound theory that an English-speaking child, say of ten or twelve years, must be taught the meaning of *Bitte, machen Sie das Fenster auf*, in the same slow way that a German child learns it. Of course one can do it if he sets about it. By letting the pupil hear a very large number of properly modulated sentences beginning with *bitte*, one can at last convey the idea that the word is one to be used in making a polite request. So too by pointing to a window in his presence, or showing him a picture of a window, and pronouncing the word *Fenster* at the same time, one can let him know what the noun means. By opening the window a sufficient number of times and saying *ich mache auf* and *ich mache zu*, or by having members of the class execute the order, one can show how the particles are used. By still more roundabout devices one can contrive to let him know when he must say *machen Sie das Fenster auf*, and when *mache das Fenster*

auf. But isn't all this very much like using the deaf-and-dumb alphabet with a person who can talk? How much easier it is to put the learner on the right track at the outset by telling him that the German way of saying *Please open the window*, if he is talking to his teacher, is *bitte, machen Sie das Fenster auf*, and if he is talking to a schoolmate, *bitte, mache das Fenster auf*. The question, How soon he shall learn to parse *bitte* and to conjugate *aufmachen* etc. is another question to be answered in the light of the learner's age and capabilities. There is no hard-and-fast rule on this subject, and it is best not to have a morbid dread of either grammar or translation. Just as writers who write for children often blunder by writing down to them too much, so one may easily make the mistake of teaching down to them. Here as elsewhere, what is needed is not a vigorous and rigorous theory, but a good command of the language one is teaching, a clear view of the goal to be reached, a sympathetic interest in the pupil and a pliable mind that can profit by the results of experience.

In reading Prof. Jespersen I have naturally been interested to compare his views with those set forth in the Report of our American Committee of Twelve. There are some differences between us, but a journal of philology is hardly the place to debate them. Suffice it to say that they are nowhere radical; they relate not so much to the nature of the goal as to the comparative effectiveness of certain devices for reaching it. Some questions of this kind, for example, that of the initial use of a phonetic alphabet, will have to be settled by experience. Meanwhile I heartily commend Prof. Jespersen's book to American teachers.¹ It is sane, practical, illuminative. Some of his views may appear to them too "advanced"; but a stimulating counsel of perfection is always better than a handy rule of thumb.

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¹ English translation by Mrs. Yhlen-Olsen Bertelsen to be published soon by Sonnenschein & Co. London.